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JOHN MITCHEL

A STUDY OF IRISH NATIONALISM

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A Study of Irish Nationalism
BY EMILE MONTEGUT

*TRANSLATED AND
EDITED BY J. M. HONE*

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INTRODUCTION

THE following essay (with the title of "An Exile of Young Ireland") first appeared in an historic number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, that in which Charles Baudelaire published "Les Fleurs du Mal." Many Irishmen must have read it at the time, yet I can find in contemporary letters no allusion to a commentary on Irish discontent, at once so intelligent and sympathetic. In many of its aspects the Young Ireland movement of 1848 has now passed into history, but John Mitchel is still a favourite theme with our young literary patriots, and Montégut's appreciation of the Irish people, which often reminds one curiously of the views expressed in Mr. Bernard Shaw's celebrated preface to "John Bull's Other Island," retains, sixty years later, much of its actuality. "An article," says Mr. John Eglinton, in his essay on "The De Davisation of Irish Literature," which every Irishman who wishes to "see himself as others see him," should read.

A word on Montégut himself. He died in 1895, and has not been very fortunate in his posthumous reputation. Even in his lifetime he had less fame than was due. But the historians of French literature unite to praise him. M.

Faguet speaks of his vigorous and original outlook, his very delicate taste, his courage before paradox—Montégut described Hamlet as the most energetic of men. “I have rarely,” says Professor Saintsbury, “found any work, short of the Aristotelian-Longinian-Coleridgian class stand the test of re-reading better than his.” With a little luck Montégut might have acquired the reputation of a Sainte Beuve or a Taine. But he was constantly engaged in hackwork, and he failed to realise that a critic must write much and repeat his text if his work is to survive. At the same time his essays are a real storehouse of ideas, and he was free from many of the delusions of Taine and his epoch. Most of his work appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, including his greatly praised “Boccaccio.” He began to write for that Review about 1850, and soon became known as an expert critic of English literature and affairs. He translated Shakespeare, Emerson and Macaulay, a rather curious company.

The essay on Mitchel (a review of the *Fail Journal*) was among his earlier writings, and is dated 1855; it was re-published in the eighties in a volume entitled “Choses du Nord and du Midi.” Here Montégut attempted to identify his critical inquiries with the construction of a general theory of national history and character. It was a tendency of the nineteenth century, which Montégut himself subsequently opposed by drawing a distinction between purely literary criticism and the criticism which proposes for

itself a social object. Mr. Saintsbury dislikes this tendency ; but it is one to which students of Anglo-Irish literature are necessarily open, for Anglo-Irish literature is not even yet free from pre-occupation with National politics. Montégut endeavours to explain to continental readers the causes of Irish hostility to Great Britain. He does not dwell very strongly on the actual grievances of Ireland. He is of opinion that there is much to be said for the conquering Englishman as compared, for instance, with the conquering Austrian or Russian : the Englishman at all events has a prejudice against *useless* cruelties. Mitchel's own narrative shows that he was treated with courtesy by his enemies, from the turnkeys upwards. Indeed Montégut scarcely blames the English in Ireland except for certain errors of taste. But he holds out no hope of Anglo-Irish friendship. His failure to produce "a happy solution of the Irish Question" will be deemed an oversight nowadays, nor could his pessimism ever have been appreciated by the partisans or party in these islands. "There is nothing extraordinary," he writes, "in the way in which the Irish and English hate each other." He argues that European peoples may be divided on the one hand into English, Germans, Dutch, Scandinavians ; on the other into Latins, Celts and Slavs. "The Celts have a taste for pastoral and patriarchal life, so have the Slavs ; they have a love for the native soil, the Latins too possess this virtue. Even in their vices,

the Latins, Celts and Slavs differ from the Teutonic peoples. The word *Earnest* admirably describes the Teutonic character, the word, *Fitful*, the Celtic, Latin and Slav character. The accomplished excessive type of the genius of the Earnest is certainly the English people, and the excessive type of the genius of the Fitful is certainly the Irish." Such a view scarcely suits the style of our modern optimists, whether of the Nationalist or Unionist variety. We infer from Montégut that England and Ireland have one grievance in common, and a lasting grievance: their nearness to each other.

But (it will be said) history has contradicted the opinions of Montégut. Have not the relations between England and Ireland sensibly improved during the last fifty years? Are not the two countries about to become fast friends? Very well! But in justice to Montégut, we must remember that he inserted this proviso in his prophecies "So long as the Irish remain Irish and the English English." The Irish have been largely Anglicised since 1855. This truth is generally admitted; what if a complimentary process has been at work in England! Did not the Count Gobineau, a contemporary of Montégut, write in his remarkable book on the mixture of races that England under the Union would be conquered by the Celt? Here an interesting avenue of speculation is opened out, an avenue which the war has made attractive; indeed some patriotic Englishmen have already

asserted in the *Times* and other places that the Teutonic element in the English character (in Montégut's time supposed to be predominant), is now almost obliterated. Our own Mr. Kettle informed us recently in one of his delightful recruiting speeches that England might now be regarded as completely civilised—thanks to the labour of Irishmen !

Montégut's analysis is illuminating, even if we entirely reject, in the modern manner, all arguments from race. He had evidently been reading Renan's famous study of the Celtic character, and out of it, and the *Fail Journal*, he had constructed his article, for he had no first-hand knowledge of Ireland. He seems to think that every Irishman is like Mitchel, but when he refers to Mitchel's outcrys of pure passion and his failure to produce a scheme for the better government of Ireland, as though this were "characteristically Celtic," we should remember that the making of "serious" books on the "Irish Question" has been an industry in which Irishmen as well as Englishmen were engaged, even in Mitchel's time. Nowadays, I am told, no one trusts Renan's race theories, and we have ceased—since Mr. Yeats himself repudiated the Celtic renaissance—to think that there is anything to be gained by describing the Irish as Celts. It is all the more astonishing that Montégut's essay should retain its vitality. We need but read Irish where he wrote Celt, and there is not a passage in it on which the cobwebs will seem to have

gathered. Revolutionaries may have grown scarcer in Ireland, but possibly Montégut exaggerated the strength of Mitchel's party in 1848. His description of the Irish revolutionary, his motives and passions, and his analysis of anti-English sentiment in Ireland are extraordinarily apt. In another place he compares "political tempests" in Ireland to the storms of nature: "the storm ceases, and on the very same evening the hills of green Ireland are greener than ever." This is as "topical" as the passages in which he explains why no Prince Charming in the shape of a foreign power is likely to help Ireland in her troubles. Finally, Montégut recognises the literary value of Mitchel's book. *The Fain Journal* was written with temperament, and temperament distinguishes it from the rather dreary mass of our patriotic writings.

J. M. H.

JOHN MITCHEL

IN the year 1848, when every throne in Europe rocked, and every race was disturbed, Ireland had her own little rebellion: it was easily suppressed. This revolutionary attempt passed, so to speak, unperceived. No one troubled about the fate of Ireland or had a tear of pity for her prisoners, one of whom was descended from the ancient kings of Munster. The Catholics themselves, the only party in Europe which at any time has shown sympathy for Ireland, were unmoved. Must we attribute this indifference to the state of confusion into which Europe was then plunged?

The attitude of Europe may be explained in two ways. In the first place, the nearness of England will always be hurtful to the poor sister Cinderella, who, with her eyes full of tears and fixed on her flameless hearth, has for centuries hungrily awaited the arrival of the Prince Charming, who is to raise her to the dignity of a Queen; but, alas! the days of fairy princes are over. In the second place, the singular character of this nation escapes the judgment of democratic crowds and vulgar multitudes; it can only interest a few individuals who have sufficient moral elevation to understand certain delicacies

which disappear from day to day. Would we submit monastic institutions, mystical books, detachment from the things of the earth to the judgment of the democratic masses? Well, the Celtic character, like monastic life, like the passion of the ideal, like delicacy of sentiment, evades the appreciation of the vulgar. This is the eternal honour of the Celt and his ruin, and hence this race is at the same time inferior and superior to the rest of humanity. One may say of the Irish that they find themselves in a false situation here below. Placed between memory and hope, the race will never conquer what it desires, and it will never discover what it regrets.

If the oppressor of Ireland were Austria or Russia, no invective, no anger would suffice to denounce the injustice and cruelty of the tyrant. Unhappily the oppressor of Ireland is England, Protestant England, constitutional, liberal, industrial and trading England, the most accomplished type of the modern nation, the model of nineteenth century civilisation. How could the men of our time be expected to take Ireland's part? Has Ireland invented spinning looms, railways, steamboats? What invention, what service does Europe owe to her? These are true arguments of the merchants, the industrialists, the economists; they are a very numerous and important race to-day, and their tendency is to think on every subject in terms of cotton and of oil. Can Ireland, the politicians ask in their turn, provide a government

of a more intelligent and reasonable kind than the English Government. Has she any other ideal of government than the Celtic clan, the power of a half savage aristocracy tempered by the religious fervour of the priest: two powers which all the nations have renounced, and which can no longer regulate a complicated society like ours? This is the view of the influential, opulent, enlightened section of European society. Abandoned by these all-powerful classes, can the Irish count at least on the sympathies of the revolutionists? No. The most anarchical Irishman, the most fiery partisan of physical force is in fact less versed in liberal ideas than the most obstinate monarchist on the Continent. John Mitchel, assuredly the most violent of the young Irelanders, is at bottom, less revolutionary than the average English shopkeeper. He is revolutionary on the surface, in his accent and expression, but not in spirit or in principle. Nor is the obstinate attachment of the Irish to Catholicism calculated to conquer the sympathies of the radicals. In short, neither the extreme nor the moderate sections of modern society set store on Ireland, and she finds them in turn indifferent and lukewarm towards her cause.

By virtue of her very position Ireland cannot expect that public opinion will be excited by her misfortunes as it might be by the misfortunes of other peoples. The shadow of England covers her. The contrast with the land of liberty, of commerce and industry is too striking, and must mislead

the masses. On the one side all is activity, work and wealth ; on the other all is idleness, abandonment of self, poverty. On one side reign the principles of virtue in which we all live ; on the other the principles which are hostile to our existence. Who would not prefer England to Ireland, and who would dare to pronounce for Ireland against England ?

There is another deeper and more profound reason. Our manner of judgment to-day is essentially prosaic and bourgeois : we weigh and we measure things, peoples, races, as we measure oil or as we weigh stuffs. All that cannot be classed or numbered is valueless in our eyes. A man has only a productive and commercial value ; and the more a people produces the greater it is. The greatest nation in the world is that which manufactures and sells the most. An American has given us in these latter years the caricature of this materialistic method of appreciation. A decent professor of agriculture from Edinburgh, Mr. Johnson, relates how, having entered one day into a butcher's shop of some town or other in the Union in order to inspect different kinds of beef and mutton, he was distracted from his economic contemplation by these words of the triumphant butcher : Is it not true that we are a great people ? The same traveller tells how an almanack of the State of New York once fell into his hands. The author of this remarkable production gave the weight of each representative of the State, and adjudged them hierarchically

according to the number of pounds which each one weighed. "So and so is an able and very intelligent man," said this ingenious almanack, "but he only weighs 120 pounds, whereas here is one who weighs 280, a solid representative." Let us not laugh too loudly at this gross eccentricity ; our judgments greatly resemble that of the American almanack. Alas ; the unhappy Irish Celts have nothing that we can measure, weigh or gauge. Neither have they those qualities which can be appreciated up to a certain point as material productions are appreciated—regularity in work, patience, provision, economy—they own none of the virtues that are in habitual common use. They have, if one may express oneself, the superfluous and not the necessary. Their qualities are articles of luxury inferior to their condition, qualities which would adorn and charm a brilliant and idle existence, but which can in no way aid a precarious and famished one ; they have the gifts of the orator and poet : spirit, imagination, delicacy of sentiment, gaiety, abandon ; it would be better for them if they had the qualities of the farmer, and blacksmith, and the miner.

The modern world, which only esteems what it can see and touch, is not grateful to Ireland for all her seductive gifts, and, in fact, this unhappy race is now but a *débris* : a memory of things and of times which will not return. It is entirely isolated in our Occident ; in all that exists nothing resembles it, nowhere does it find a reflection of itself. . . . It is often difficult to define

plainly the differences which separate races, for these differences are not glaring, they consist chiefly in very delicate shades. Without employing the microscope, the scalpel, and such fine instruments of analysis, we perceive that the division of the human species into three races as given to us in the Bible is the only division of absolute certitude, whatever point of view one may take. The differences between the three races are obvious, and, so to speak, material. It requires no instrument of philosophical optics to show the points that separate the one from the other, and that characterise each. The difficulty becomes greater as soon as we try to establish the differences that separate the divers people, composing each of the three great races. It is easy to distinguish clearly an Asiatic from an European; but in what respect does an Arab differ from a Persian? He does differ, as an Italian differs from a Frenchman. But is the difference between an Italian and a Frenchman really considerable? Really, in observing the Caucasian world, we perceive but two well marked characters: on the one hand the Germanic character (the Scandinavian countries Germany, Holland, England, and North America) which is strongly marked, highly individual, one might almost say, and on the other a certain more impersonal, more metaphysical character, a character less indissolubly bound to race, to flesh and blood, and which is common to all the other peoples of Europe

(Celts, Latins, Slavs). These latter peoples are separated from each other by almost imperceptible shades, as is proved by the extraordinary facility with which they understand each other. The Celts have a taste for pastoral and patriarchal life, so have the Slavs. They have a love of their native soil; the Latins too possess this virtue. Even in their vices they are unlike the Germanic peoples. Their drunkenness has nothing in common with the heavy and brutal drunkenness of the Germans and the English; it is the gay, giddy, laughing drunkenness of a French crowd, of Polish soldiers, of Russian peasants. The Irish are reproached for untruthfulness, but this is the vice of all the peoples save the Germanic. The word *EARNEST* admirably describes the Germanic character, the word *FITFUL* the Celtic, Latin and Slav character. The accomplished excessive type of the genius of the earnest is the English people as certainly as the excessive type of the genius of the fitful is the Irish.

There is therefore nothing extraordinary in the reciprocal hatred of the two peoples, and the oppression of Ireland by England appears to be a natural fact. The Celts find themselves in this abnormal position, that they are at the same time the most anarchical and the most conservative of men: they are always behind the times. The Anglo-Saxons, on the contrary, have always lived in the present. For them the living moment resumes time in its entirety; the possession of the actual

thing is the supreme joy: *to have is to enjoy*. Irish resistance lacks patience and length, it wears itself out quickly and gives place to a state of prostration which ends in a sudden awakening and explosions of savage fury. Political parties exploit the sterile crimes of the Irish. The English press exaggerates them, and presents them to the world as a justification of British policy. Sanguinary Celts: up goes the cry. Political tempests in Ireland are like the storms of nature: the storm ceases, and on the very same evening the hills of green Erin are greener than ever, and the British birds sing their complaints of love and attachment, intermingled with satirical whistlings against papism and papists. Certainly Ireland does not know how to resist a nation which has never perpetrated a useless crime, which has never done murder in anger or drawn back in pity.

We will let English publicists reproach this unhappy people for its negligence, idleness, drunkenness and violence; it is a task in which they have acquitted themselves well from time immemorial, and one which merely increases the hatred which divides the two nations. One imagines that insult loses its power when addressed to a whole people: it is not so. Ireland has often replied either by some bloody *quodlibet* or by some even bloodier action: scuffles in the streets of Dublin, outrages against English authority, shots from behind hedges at the Orangeman or the Anglican, abstraction of criminals from justice.

Europe only sees the bad side of these reprisals. English publicity is immense, and all Europe reads English newspapers ; but who reads Irish journals or pamphlets ? In these polemics England always speaks the last word, and just as English civilisation harms the cause of Ireland, so the noise of English publicity stifles the voice of the Irish people ; in this ugly struggle Europe only hears the voice of England.

John Mitchel amply returns insult for insult. He spits on England ; he picks the mud off the road to throw it in her face, he shakes under her eyes those fetid Irish rags crawling with vermin and impregnated with the poison of typhus. The spirit of vengeance animates the pages of the *Fail Journal*, a diary in which the author's nervous ills, his explosions of solitary anger, the torments of his bile, the furies of his blood, were recorded moment by moment. A book written with temperament, and the temperament of a condemned Irish politician ! Do not seek in it political opinions ; it has none : instincts here replace opinions. A bitter and implacable sentiment connects all these pages together and make the unity of the book : this sentiment is hatred of England. Do not ask the author if he is Catholic, Liberal or Republican, do not ask what government he would give to Ireland. He hardly knows. He does know that he hates England with all the forces of his soul, and that he is ready to rebel against her on every occasion, and that there is no party of

which he is not prepared to declare himself the defender, provided that England perish : French *sans-culottes*, Austrian aristocrats, Russian despotism please him in turn. The revolution of February drove him to revolt ; but do not think that he was consistent with himself, and that he was much afflicted by the death of the Republic ! Of all succeeding events he asks but one thing ; will they or will they not hurt England ? Do they contain an occasion for the humiliation of Carthage ? He applauds Mazzini, the enemy of Catholicism ; likewise he would applaud an Ultramontane Bishop of Ireland blessing the standards of a Celtic insurrection. He salutes the French republic with hope ; but when on the pontoons of Bermuda he learns of Louis Napoleon's election to the Presidency, he gives a great shout of joy ; on his arrival in America he learns the news from the east, and he echoes the warlike trumpets of the Czar which resound on the Danube. In each of these events he hears the good news : England's agony !

This patriot goes to such length that he would unhesitatingly sacrifice modern civilisation, if there were no other means of striking England to the dust. England is chiefly vulnerable on the side of her material interests ; would that the credit of the world might be overturned and her commerce destroyed ! If the world would go bankrupt England would share the fate of Ireland ; the perspective fills John Mitchel with a giddy joy. Gladly would he return to savage life if

this old enemy were reduced to beggary. The progress of humanity during four hundred years counts for little with him: only one thing pleases him, the invention of gunpowder and firearms, if Ireland could have enough of them both to apply the law of retaliation in her turn! All other inventions, railways, steamboats, manufactures, shops and docks, even libraries may burn like straw; he won't trouble over them. Mitchel is so absorbed by hatred that he takes the illusions of his hatred for realities. Thus he is firmly convinced that credit and such like things are an immense mystification founded by a few charlatans for the exploitation of the numerous dupes that compose humanity, that all our bank notes, letters of exchange, &c., are nothing but scraps of paper; that it all reposes on a pure abstraction, on an ignorant sentiment, and will collapse one day like a bubble; that industrial property is pure fiction; that those who confide their savings to it are improvident, mad or foolish, and that nothing is solid but property in land. The notes of the Bank of England are drafts of Notus & Co., drawn on Eurus & Co. Nothing more. England has not gone bankrupt, and the fraud has not been discovered because she has at her disposition the countries which she can rob (sic) ruthlessly; but suppose means were found for preventing these robberies in the future, what would happen? Mitchel proves his assertion by a host of reasons, some of which are ingenious and the greater

part puerile. But as a rule he is hardly interested in economic dissertations, and he prefers to let loose some bitter and bloody jest, or to paraphrase some awful imprecation from the Bible, this one for instance which he cites somewhere: "That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies and the tongue of thy dogs in the same."

Let us not rush too hastily to the conclusion that Mitchel is a revolutionary *à la Française*. There could be no greater error. He is a pure Irishman. He revolts against England, and every way of destroying her seems to him to be good, even the most savage. Twice or thrice he speaks of the European Socialists with the profoundest disdain, and, as moderation is not numbered among his virtues, he says openly that they are ferocious beasts that should be killed or shot at sight. He expresses few political opinions; but if he has preferences they are for patriarchal and rustic life, for societies founded on landed property. He applauds revolutions not because they destroy monarchies and aristocracies, but because he considers these institutions to be worn out in their present form. In this respect he professes the theories of Carlyle, whom we are rather surprised to encounter in this book. Revolutions seem to him to be desirable, because they will produce in the long run the new political forms which shall remake the world, and not because they will assert the doctrine of the rights of man and force humanity to a common level. Hence he accepts

republicanism everywhere, not as an end but as a means. In other words Mitchel has revolutionary instincts; he has no democratic sentiments. He is incontestably factious, and he claims with all his strength the title of Irish felon.

Quite unintentionally Mitchel contradicts the most elementary ideas of democracy. He has produced a curious arraignment of Lord Bacon and Macaulay. As an Irishman he has the right to execrate Macaulay; but it is singular that he the revolutionist, should disregard the scientific revolution that Bacon accomplished. The Baconian revolution has two sides: on the one hand it democratised science by rendering it useful, applicable to all the needs of man, forcing it to descend from its ideal heights; on the other hand it has rendered science accessible to all by creating an, as it were, impersonal method, an instrument which the man in the street might utilise equally with the greatest scholar. Henceforward the aristocratic monopoly of Aristotle and of Archimedes collapsed; science was no longer its property and domain. There was then but one science, common to all men, like the sun, like nature. There was no more peripatetic science, no more platonic science; the fortresses in which philosophers enclosed themselves and preserved their treasures had fallen. Science since the days of Bacon, like truth since the Evangel, has been accessible to all men of goodwill, and in this fact there is more true democracy than in all the revolutions of these latter years.

Unfortunately Mitchel does not, and will not, recognise this. His opinions of Lord Bacon are those of Joseph de Maistre, his views of the destiny of science are those of Plato and Archimedes, who forbade their disciples to degrade science by making it serve the arts of slaves. Like Pythagoras and Aristotle he would divide science into two parts: the one esoteric and the other exoteric: the one made for the initiated, the other for aspirants to initiation. There could be no more aristocratic method. Nevertheless, in spite of this inconsistency, I congratulate Mitchel. The Baconian revolution has been profitable and useful; but in more than one sense a reaction is desirable. Humanity has already had from this revolution all the profit it can expect. Thanks to this revolution humanity as a whole, and not a few privileged individuals, has been called upon to contemplate the marvels of the universe and has been able, therefore, to raise itself to a higher spiritual existence: this is the true progress accomplished; but to give the name of science to all the more or less ingenious inventions that have multiplied in an epoch, and the object of all of which is to procure us pleasure or enjoyment, to give the name of scientist to every man who has produced some mechanical combination or made some empirical observation of detail, this is to reduce science to the rôle which Bentham assigned to justice. Which of us would wish to believe with Bentham that justice is a matter of pure utility? Science, too, exists in order to

render apparent the ideal and permanent laws which sustain the world. That is its true object, and in spite of Macaulay, who has pushed the other doctrine to extremes, is not contradicted by the Baconian revolution. Bacon endowed the masses with a privilege enjoyed by a few individuals: he wished Science to leave its pinnacle; but he did not wish that it should become the housewife, the servant, or the middleman of humanity. This materialistic tendency, leading into a morass of detail without unity, and this rage for practical results, however vulgar and mean, have outrun the measure in England, and has been encouraged even in France. Only Germany, mystical and speculative Germany, in the midst of all these errors, remains faithful to the high mission of science. . . . I thank Mitchel for having upheld the unpopular thesis, but I must add that it is neither democratic nor revolutionary. His hatred of England has for once benefited him.

And he is at his best whenever he attacks England in the name of a principle superior to utility. There is exaggeration, but there is also some truth in his criticism of English politics as cruel, implacable, prudent towards the strong, pitiless towards the weak, never invoking right until cunning and force have failed, disliking violence and only deciding on violence when it can be carried out in secret. His witticisms at the expense of the Anglican Church—an object of pure practical utility, and which no more re-

seems a true church than the empirical science of which we have just spoken resembles true science—these witticisms are bitter and full of sense. The established Church, with its “beautiful liturgy,” is in effect only a sort of manufactory of prayers and orisons, as the House of Baring is a manufactory of letters of exchange, as Sheffield is a manufactory of cutlery. Politics has founded it, politics maintains it; this Church accomplishes a social object. But Mitchel is mistaken when he accuses modern English civilisation of not being Christian. The Englishman indeed is not a Christian from devotion or sacrifice, he is a Christian in his idea of work, and in his fulfilment of duty. You will obtain from him in justice what you cannot obtain by love. He is too individual to abandon himself to spontaneous movements of the heart; but he obeys his conscience. In this sense he is religious, and profoundly so; all the faults with which Mitchel reproaches England are too often but the contrary qualities to those of his nation.

Mitchel's *Journal* begins in 1848 and ends in 1853, that is to say, it comprehends the whole duration of recent European troubles. But the author is only acquainted with fragments of this very recent history. He was far away from Europe on the inhospitable shores of Bermuda, outside the Cape of Good Hope, or in Van Diemen's Land. One of the first victims of the revolution of 1848, by the month of May, 1848, he ceased to count among the actors of the European

drama of politics, and he did not even witness the deplorable issue of the insurrection in Tipperary. What then was his crime ?

Mitchel, as I have said, has no considered political views. His opinions are sentiments, instincts, and cannot be otherwise : they are the result not of a calm and reasoned contemplation of Irish affairs, but of the impressions which certain facts, to wit, the famine and the semi-defection of O'Connell, produced upon his imagination. John Mitchel entered into political life at the moment when the O'Connellite and legal agitation had lost its force. He witnessed the last pitiable movements of the old dying lion, he heard the final accents of that enfeebled voice. O'Connell, dying in Italy, had asked that his body should be sent, not to Ireland, but to Rome ; the party which was to succeed him broke with Rome. O'Connell had recommended legal agitation, the party of young Ireland recommended armed resistance and proclaimed itself traitor to England. The glorious name of O'Connell was outraged.

The latter years of O'Connell, an epoch in which his political predilections and his habits of life and mind became veritable prejudices, contributed above all to the formation of the violent party. In 1846 Famine broke out in Ireland, not the permanent famine which for many years had been emaciating the country, and had gnawed at the last shreds of her rags, but a veritable scourge of the type of cholera and typhus. Starved Irish peasants died in crowds

in the open ; their corpses bordered the high roads of Ireland ; mothers carefully hid the bodies of their new-born children in order to feed themselves secretly ; unhappy and desperate men locked themselves up in their homes and died in solitude. Crime accompanied the terror ; Government took action and increased the sense of injustice ; O'Connell was discredited, and the Young Irelanders became the only powerful party. Clubs were formed, arms forged, journals founded, one of which, *The United Irishman*, the organ of Mitchel and his friends, openly advocated insurrection. The English Government on its side did not remain idle. Lord Clarendon, then Viceroy of Ireland, concentrated 8,000 men in Dublin, multiplied his spies, and bought up the journalists, amongst others a certain Birch, editor of the *Satirist*, an Irish comic sheet, and publicly denounced by proclamations and placards the proceedings and the projects of the revolutionary chiefs. He went further. The revolution had not yet broken out ; it was necessary to prevent it if possible, and at Clarendon's instigation the English Government took prudent measures. In the month of April Sir George Grey presented Parliament with a Bill relating to the crime of high treason. It declared that whoever should raise the standard of revolution in Ireland or refuse to recognise the Queen's title, or should excite others either by word of mouth or in writing not to recognise the Sovereign, should be guilty of the crime of high treason and be liable to punish-

ment for that offence. The action of Sir George Grey must have cut at the root of the trouble, unless the rebels had immediately assembled all their forces and had been ready to act at once. It rendered all preparations impossible, and annihilated press and clubs; day by day, and indeed hour by hour, the insurrection was attacked root and branch, now by the seizure of one of the chiefs, now by suppression of a newspaper or the imprisonment of a partisan. Three leaders of the revolutionary propaganda, Smith O'Brien, Meagher and Mitchel were arrested and tried for sedition. Mitchel, in particular, it would appear, was the object of Lord Clarendon's attention; Smith O'Brien and Meagher, tried before ordinary juries, were acquitted. Mitchel was condemned, and he accused Lord Clarendon of having chosen a special jury for his case, from which all Catholics were arbitrarily excluded and all Protestants who were not his enemies.

Mitchel, an educated, intelligent, fierce and violent man, then resolved to write a journal, in which he would preserve, for the edification of posterity, the recital of his sufferings. In this object he failed completely. His book will never secure the emotional success of the journal of Silvio Pellico or of the story of Ardryane. In truth, the book pleads for England, it is an apology for England's humanity and the gentleness of her Government. These ferocious Carthagarians, this tyrannical Queen of Carthage, these English functionaries, ministers, officers of

marine, policemen, constables, flunkies, are represented as the most honourable men in the world ; polite, affable, thoughtful, gentle, Mitchel cannot accuse them of a single insult or a single brutal act or an unkind word. Mitchel has the right to hate England ; that he should hate the people of England—well ! The Government that punished him was a proud one, and, no doubt (especially in Irish affairs) an unjust one ; but it had its generous sides. His enemies were a hard people, full of race prejudice (a circumstance which encourages brutality and unpleasantness ; but taken for all in all, a humane people and one opposed to useless cruelties. In whatever corner of the earth Mitchel found himself, whether in Bermuda or at the Cape or in Van Diemen's Land, he met only honest men who were intent on their duty, and added no sternness of their own invention as Russians or Germans might do. What would Mitchel have said if he had been condemned by Austria or by Russia ? In these countries he would have found the police officers much less polite, he would have had to undergo a much harder experience. Mitchel continually inveighs against the aristocratic tyranny of England ; has he a right to complain ? should he not thank this haughty, and after all, legitimate, despotism for the respect with which its servants never ceased to surround him whilst he was prisoner, on the pontoons and in the land of exile ? To the aristocratic pride which in England distinguishes the well bred and educated classes

Mitchel should attribute the fact that he was treated like a gentleman. If he had been in a democratic country, he would have encountered different treatment. The hatreds of Mitchel are well founded, so far as English policy in general is concerned ; then they explain themselves very naturally, but they are unjust when he personally is in question. Let the reader judge for himself. My opinion is based on Mitchel's own testimony.

On the 27th May, 1848, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Mitchel was despatched from Dublin to Spike Island, a convict prison situated in the Cove of Cork. Here is his own account of his departure : Sentence had been pronounced—fourteen years transportation ; and I had returned to my cell and taken leave of my wife and two poor boys. A few minutes after they had left me a gaoler came in with a suit of coarse grey clothes in his hand. “ You are to put on these,” he said, “ directly.” I put them on directly. A voice then shouted from the foot of the stairs. “ Let him be removed in his own clothes ” ; so I was ordered to change again, which I did. In the courtyard of the prison a constable attached a chain to the foot of the prisoner ; the party then entered a closed carriage, under escort of a detachment of cavalry. Some minutes later Mitchel was on board the “ Shearwater.” The commander of the “ Shearwater,” a man of about forty-five years of age, received Mitchel politely, had the irons taken off, and ordered sherry and water. He spoke familiarly with the prisoner, and

told him that he was called Captain Hall. "Good," said Mitchel, "then you were recently in China and wrote a book." The Captain replied in the affirmative and then, to prevent any misunderstanding, informed Mitchel that he was not Captain Basil Hall. "I presume," he said, "you have read his voyage to the Loo Choo Islands." I said I had; also another book of which I liked far better, his "Account of the Chilian and Peruvian Revolutions." Captain Hall laughed. "Your mind, he said, "has been running upon revolutions, dangerous things, these revolutions." On arriving at Spike Island Mr. Grace, the Governor, entered Mitchel's cell, telling him that he might write to his family provided that the letter was first communicated to him, and that his library was at the prisoner's disposition. Next day he announced with many expressions of regret that Mitchel would have to wear convict's dress, a useless severity which the Government immediately countermanded. Mr. Grace returned a third time accompanied by the prison inspector. "It has become my duty to inform you that Government have determined on sending you out of the country." "Indeed! How soon?" "To-morrow morning." "May I ask to what part of the world?" "Bermuda." "And by what conveyance?" "A man-of-war which has arrived to-day in the harbour." Mr. Grace then said that the Government had given instructions that he should not be treated as an ordinary convict, or put in irons, but that he

should be regarded as an educated man and a gentleman. Next day the warship "Scourge," under Captain Musgrove, sailed for Bermuda. Musgrove was a man of about fifty years of age, bilious, taciturn, yet affable, who received the prisoner at his table and afforded him the right to come and go on the bridge, so long as he gave the sentry notice as a matter of form. The officers on board behaved agreeably, offered books to Mitchel and tried to make the voyage as pleasant as possible. Truly, I find it difficult to comprehend Mitchel's anathemas against the Carthaginians. Wherever we look we only see honest, polite and indulgent people. Mitchel was lucky in having been condemned to the regime of the pontoons of aristocratic England ; supposing that he had been forced to spend some time on the pontoons of the French democratic republic ; perhaps with his delicate health, his nervous and irritable temperament, he might to-day have some excuse for his voluminous torrents of insults. If Mitchel is dissatisfied with Carthaginian treatment he is a difficult man to please.

What can be done during a long sea journey ? Yawn, dream, read, meditate plans of vengeance ? Mitchel escapes boredom by discoursing on suicide, on Lord Bacon or Macaulay, on Sir Alexander Burns, on English politics, and the merits of celebrated autobiographies. Every page of the journal has on it a well known date. The date that he wrote the imprecation against England, Prince Windischgratz bombarded Prague ; one

dissertation was written during "the days of June"; another on the day of the famous debate in the Parliament of San Paul; a third on the day of Smith O'Brien's unhappy rising. Whenever his hatred of England gives him some respite Mitchel thinks of Ireland, he counts chiefly on Martin to continue his unfinished work. I am sorry that during the long hours he did not more often tramp the deck, murmuring some Irish song, like that which he hummed when in view of the Bermudas

A plenteous place is Ireland for hospitable cheer.

Ullagone dhu, Oh !

Where the wholesome fruit is bursting from the yellow barley ear,

Ullagone dhu, Oh !

There is honey in the trees, where the misty vales expand

And the forest-paths in summer are by fallen waters fanned,

There is a dew at high noontide there, and springs in the yellow sands,

On the fair hills of holy Ireland.

Bermuda is not quite so hospitable a country as Ireland. In the sixteenth century, as Washington Irving tells us, it was supposed to be the abode of demons and lost souls. Tempests, it was said, continually besieged these shores, which spirits alone could visit. Here Ariel, the devoted

servant of Prospero, went to pluck the dews necessary to his master's sorceries ; still-vexed Bermoothes, says the great English poet. The Bermudas owe a good deal of their reputation to their inhospitable aspect and their aridity. Here under a burning sun Mitchel had to endure his penalty. The day after his arrival he left the "Scourge" and was transported to the pontoon "The Dromedary." Nor was the life of the pontoons which he led for about six months calculated to cheer his soul or to lead it back to gentle feelings. A despairing monotony hovered over everything around him : the everlasting sea with its uniform horizon, the unchanging aspect of a dry and burning land, the convicts for sole distraction. Reduced to a forced solitude the prisoner was driven back on himself, he lived on his own substance, and had it not been for the tempests that rose in his soul and made his pulse beat stronger, he would have lost the sentiment of life and its dramatic agitations. What a martyrdom for a lively Irishman, avid of emotions ! The rare incidents that broke the monotony from time to time were of a horrible character. One day three convicts escaped from the pontoon of the "Coromandel." Taking advantage of a wind they reached the shore and pillaged a house or two, then after having secured provisions in this expeditious manner, they seized a boat with the intention of making for North America. The boat was stranded on a bank, the fugitives were seized, and condemned by the Governor to be scourged

successively on the three pontoons, the "Coromandel" the "Dromedary" and the "Medway." The horrible punishment was rigorously executed, but Mitchel's reflections were curious. He did not object to the flogging of convicts. "But think of soldiers and sailors being beaten like hounds. But in the Carthaginian army high spirit and self-respect are not allowable ; private soldiers are not to consider themselves men, but machines." Why is it less legitimate to apply such punishment to a sailor or a soldier in a land where force is the only method of discipline than to beat the convict to death ? Insubordination on the part of a sailor or of a soldier may be contagious and compromise the gravest interests of the nation ; but what interests do those poor devils compromise who, in trying to escape, merely obey an instinct most natural to man.

A very interesting organ of the English Radical party, *The Leader*, publishes every week a short summary of the crimes committed in London. All the savage acts of human nature are registered by it alongside columns which describe the proceedings in Parliament, city happenings, events in the theatrical world and literary movements. Civilisation and barbarism are nowhere more sharply contrasted than in London. As in London, the inattentive traveller may notice only the shops and beggars, so in Bermuda Mitchel could only see the convicts. The information he gives us in regard to their life and character are not, however, as unfavourable as he

thinks to the system of transportation adopted by England. The beggars and the poor of London speak, he says, of transportation without horror, and even regard the exchange of their sordid liberty for the condition of a convict as a benefit. A young man, a locksmith, transported to Bermuda was enchanted with his new position. Here there is no work, he wrote to his parents, nothing to do except eat, drink and walk like a gentleman. He intended to marry a negress and to live happily and contentedly with her ever afterwards. Mitchel says with horror that one of the things which seemed most awful to him in the life of convicts was their profound respect for the most criminal in their number ; but this fact is not peculiar to colonies of convicts, it is universal, because founded on human nature. In the world of crime the moral laws are reversed, but not destroyed. Mitchel cites a very curious sample of this singular vanity of criminals. Some time after his arrival at Bermuda he received a visit from a convict, forty-five years old and solidly built, with an appearance that indicated a man full of the idea of his personal importance—"I trust, sir, you will find everything as you wish here." "Well, Garrett," quoth I, "Garrett, Sir, Garrett ; you must know all about me ; it was in all the papers ; Garrett, you know." "Never heard of you before, Garrett." "Oh dear yes, Sir, you must be quite well aware of it—the great railway affair you remember." "No, I do not." "Oh that I am Mr. Garrett

who was connected with the ——— Railway. (I forget the name of the railway). It was a matter of £40,000 I realised. Forty thousand pounds, Sir; left it behind me, Sir, with Mrs. Garrett: she living in England in very handsome style. I have been here now two years and like it very well, devilish fine brown girls here, Sir. I am very highly thought of—created a great sensation when I came. In fact, until *you* came I was reckoned the first man in the colony. Forty thousand pounds, Sir, not a farthing less. But now you have cut me out.” I rose and bowed to this sublime rascal. The overwhelming idea that I should supersede a swindler of forty thousand pounds was too much for me. So I said, graciously bowing, “Oh, Sir, you do me too much honour; I am sure you are far more worthy of the post of distinction. For me, I never saw so much money in all my life as £40,000.” “My dear Sir,” said my friend, bowing back again, “My dear Sir, but then you are a prisoner of State, patriotic martyr, and all that. Lord John Russell, since I came out here had a private application made to me offering to remit my sentence if I would disclose my method.” “I trust, Sir,” quoth I respectfully, “that you treated the man’s application with the contempt it deserved.” The miscreant winked with one eye. “You may be sure of that, Sir,” said he. “’Tis very little I care for any of them; I enjoy myself here very much—have never had a day’s illness. Ah, Sir, there were two or three splendid coloured girls”

Mitchel finally dismissed the old monster, and requested to be protected from such intrusions in the future.

However, this monotonous life was interrupted now and again by some incident. Mitchel received from afar news of his native country, painful news, but which in his present state of fever was like a refreshing wave. Man is so made that a mournful emotion is almost a benefit in certain circumstances, because it makes him partake of the ordinary conditions of humanity. The human spirit has also its hydrophobias and its rages which blood-letting practised at the right time can dissipate. If man often hates because he has suffered much it is equally certain that he suffers less when he hates. The companions whom Mitchel left behind him in Ireland successively shared his lot; the law of high treason, rigorously applied by Lord Clarendon, produced the effect we have signalised; it quelled the revolution in detail by striking in turn at each of its organs. Meagher spoke, quickly followed deportation. Warrants had been issued against O'Gorman, O'Reilly and O'Doherty, and they had escaped; other culprits were in prison and awaited trial. All was over, and the revolution might continue on the continent; once more England was saved.

Beneath the force of so many contrary and violent emotions the health of Mitchel seriously declined. One day Doctor Hall entered his room and told him that in the climate of Bermuda he

had no chance of recovery. "And is it" Mitchel asked, "a settled part of the transportation system that an invalid is to be confined to the penal colony of all others, which is most likely to kill him?" "The Government," replied Dr. Hall, "never make any distinction of that kind; but with respect to you I do think something might be done, and in fact I have come to you to-day to urge it upon you to make the necessary exertion for this purpose. You must absolutely apply for your removal." "But I have never, since they made a felon of me, asked for any kind of indulgence or mitigation." "No," said the doctor, "but write to the Governor informing him of your state of health; tell him that I have announced to you that you cannot live under your present circumstances, and refer to me for your report." "And why not tell him yourself? You know it." "I cannot, I must not interfere officially." "Dr. Hall, I will never, by throwing myself on the mercy of the English Government, confess myself to be a felon. I will not belie my whole past life. I will not eat dust." The excellent kindly Carthaginian seemed to be about to retire, then suddenly turned brusquely, the tears in his eyes, and touched the prisoner's shoulder. "And are you going," he said, "to let yourself be closed up here till you perish a convict when by so slight an effort you could—as I am sure you could—procure not only your removal, but probably your release? You are still young: you have the right to a long life yet with your

family and honour. *Write* to the Governor in some form—a simple letter will do : and I know he wishes to exert himself in the matter if it be brought before him so as to justify his interference. Take your pen now and write.” Mitchel finally consented, and asked to be transported to another climate ; the English Government readily agreed to the demand. The Cape was the colony designed for Mitchel’s sojourn.

Having spent about eight months in Bermuda, Mitchel set out for his new prison in April 1849, in the “*Neptune*,” dreaming all the while of a pastoral life to come ; but his dream was dissipated by the Captain, who informed him that the Colony was in a state of insurrection, that it refused to receive the convicts sent by the Government, that Sir Harry Smith, the Governor, had asked for instructions, and that Lord Grey had replied with a positive order that the cargo of three hundred convicts carried by the “*Neptune*” should be landed. The commander of the ship revealed another more disagreeable fact : the Government had ordered that the prisoner should want for nothing, but he had expressly forbidden the officers of the ship to entertain any relation with him. The conduct of Captain Mongrove and of the officers of the “*Shearwater*” had been criticised in Parliament, and the Government felt itself obliged therefore to take this action which was after all a useless piece of fidgeting. Nevertheless, the voyage was a pleasant one, though at one moment provisions threatened to give out, and

a revolt might have ensued. The Captain, who was very fat, communicated his anxieties to Mitchel. He hinted at cannibalism, and all sorts of dreadful things. Mitchel answered that cannibalism had now become quite a matter of course, that in Ireland people had been eating each other for some time past, and in saying the words he glanced at the captain's well-filled belly. The captain was taken aback. However, all ended well; the scenes on the "Medusa," or those on Don Juan's barque were not renewed upon the "Neptune."

On the 18th July, 1849, the ship was within sight of Pernambuco, a fine Brazilian town. A luxuriant vegetation surrounded this place, vigorous nature appeared to dispute with man his empire; the white houses and the monasteries seemed hardly able to make good their footing on the edge of the unconquerable forest. Far off the mules tracked gravely through the pathways leading to the coffee, the sugar and the tobacco plantations; on the ships riding at anchor the banners of all the nations floated—the United States, France, England and Holland. Boats full of oranges and citrons, vegetables, and fresh bread carried by Brazilian slaves arrived at the vessel's side. Mitchel loathed the sight of the slaves as much as he appreciated the sight of the oranges they carried. So there was human injustice and tyranny everywhere; but he consoled himself thinking that, after all, these slaves were better treated than free Irishmen, that

their humour was gay, that they needed fear neither the famine nor the suspension of the "Habeas Corpus," and he made this very old-fashioned observation: the slaves in the French Portuguese and Spanish Colonies are not treated as badly as in the English colonies or in America, because with the Anglo-Saxon insolence is always added to the exercise of power. Another feature of the morals of South America is, as everyone knows, a love of lounging and a *dolce far niente* marvellously favoured by the Catholic religion. The "Neptune" lay three weeks outside Pernambuco without being able to procure her provisions. Sometimes the weather was bad, and the timid Brazilians would not risk the sea; sometimes it was a feast day, and the citizens of Pernambuco promenaded in their gala clothes without giving a thought to the "Neptune" or her needs. On board the sailors cursed the Brazilians for lazy foreign lubbers. An official in conversation with Mitchel compared the natives' habits with those of Americans and English. Mitchel, like a true Irishman, defended the Brazilians. "I do respect an indolent nation, a nation that will take its holidays, and will not risk the loss of its slaves. Your English and Yankees go too much ahead—hardly give themselves time to sleep and eat, let alone praying—keep the social machines working at too high a pressure (endangering the bursting of their boilers) and for ever out of breath. Do you call this living?" At last the "Neptune" resumed

her journey. Towards the middle of September she reached the Cape of Good Hope, and then entered Simon's Bay. But there Mitchel's journey did not end. At the Cape as at Pernambuco he was condemned to be a spectator; but this time the spectacle was a moving one, and filled the heart of Mitchel with sweet emotions. At Pernambuco he had been a passive spectator, now he was metaphysically an actor, an actor in heart and soul. England was in peril, the colony had risen against Government. In spite of the assurance given by Lord Grey that the Government would send convicts to no country without the consent of the inhabitants, an order in council had decreed that several cargoes of prisoners should be sent to the Cape. The austere Boers arose. They had hitherto lived in quiet and happiness, a patriarchal life, hardly knowing of murder, robbery or immorality, and now their homes and properties were to be soiled. The whole population formed itself into a committee of insurrection, and solemnly swore never to employ a convict, to sell nothing to a convict, and to outlaw as a traitor anyone who should help lodge or aid a convict. Go on, go on, cried Mitchel, who foresaw in it all the downfall of Carthage. Dr. Stewart, the health officer of the port, told Mitchel that no objection would be made to *his* landing. Mitchel refused stoically, saying that the colonists must not make exceptions in favour of individuals, that they had engaged in a legitimate fight, and that for his part

he was delighted to watch them defy the accursed insults of the British Government.

Sir Harry Smith was greatly embarrassed. He could not safely authorise the landing of the convicts, nor could he without fresh orders from the Government send the "Neptune" to another colony. The "Neptune" might therefore stay for another six months in enforced quarantine, and present herself to the colonists as a permanent menace. The daily sight of the detested ship encouraged the agitation. Mitchel tells many anecdotes pertaining to the anti-convict association, and they prove better than the most vigorous dissertations could do what a vigorous political spirit the Dutch and English possess. The "Neptune" being cut off from supplies by the inhabitants of Simonstown was menaced with famine. One of the ship's men landed and, after taking all sorts of precautions against being recognised, he entered a butcher's shop to buy mutton. He pretended to be in a rage and introduced himself as a messenger from another vessel, the "Minerva," which was in port, and he asked if the passengers of that ship were to die of hunger because a cargo of convicts happened to lie alongside. The butcher was not carried away by this false display of anger, and he submitted the buyer to a severe cross-examination, which ended satisfactorily for the "Neptune." But such ruses were not always crowned with success. Unhappy the merchant whose heart was touched by a suspected buyer, or who suc-

cumbed to the sentiment of covetousness or greed ! When the chiefs of the anti-convict association had word of his crime, they refused him water or salt in his turn, and forbade their compatriots to have any dealings with him. The rigorous order was rigorously executed. But the situation could not last for ever. The poorer classes suffered cruelly from the cessation of business, and the merchants from their enforced inactivity. Riots broke out against the chiefs of the association. The English Government might certainly have profited from this popular disturbance and suppressed the movement ; Sir Harry Smith had sufficient forces at his command. But the Government acted prudently and by the month of February despatches arrived from Lord Grey which extricated Sir Harry Smith from his terrible embarrassment. All the convicts on board the " Neptune " received, as compensation for the sufferings they had endured, a conditional pardon, with the exception of Mitchel, who had to recommence his maritime perigrinations. The " Neptune " sailed for Van Diemen's Land.

Mitchell has a terrible imagination. At the moment of starting on this last voyage he became the prey of lugubrious poetry. Van Diemen's Land presents itself as a country of shadow and horror, where he will encounter only solitude and suffering ; all the inhabitants are convicts. It seems to him that he is about to descend into the sombre Kingdoms of Dis, that he is about to traverse the Styx, hear the roaring of Cocytus, and

plunge into the enflamed waters of Phlegethon. He likes to exaggerate his misfortunes, no doubt, in order to hurl another torrent of insults against England. He calls to his aid all the consolation of the Portico, of the Academy, of the Mount of Olives. "Much ado about nothing," as Shakespeare says. In Van Diemen's Land all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. The climate is healthy, the country charming, the convicts do not importune him; the police leave him alone, and even permit him liberty under conditions; he meets his old friends, lives, dines, hunts and smokes with them; his health improves at once, and his wife and children come to rejoin him. He can chase the kangaroo, and even in Hobart Town, the town of convicts, he has one of the luckiest possible experiences. He meets, it appears, the most beautiful woman in the world, an Englishwoman born in France, who, after having absorbed, so to speak, all the elements of beauty which the old world could furnish, had come in earliest youth under the choicest influence of the southern stars. Mitchel had the good fortune to contemplate this splendid apparition whose glance (to use his own expression) would turn you pale, and stop your pulse for a beat or two.

And yet he complained of England! No sooner had he landed than an officer of police informed him in the name of the controller-general that he could reside in liberty in any part of the colony, with no other formality than that

of presenting himself once a month to the magistrate of his district, and promising that he would not profit by this freedom to escape. Smith O'Brien had refused to give the promise, and was consequently interned in a little island off the coast, Maria Island, where he was sternly watched; but Meagher, Martin, O'Doherty and the others had given the requisite promise, and were at liberty. Mitchel followed their example, and asked to be put in a district named Bothwell, where his friend John Martin resided: the request was granted.

The exiles were forbidden to leave the districts which they had chosen: nevertheless the guard on them was not very rigorous, and by taking a few precautions they could visit each other and write to each other. Mitchel and his friend Martin went to meet Meagher and O'Doherty. On seeing each other, the exiles burst into an immense shout of laughter, evincing the hysterical nervous joy that is the psychological sign of lively and violent natures, a substitute for tears. "We went to the door, and in a minute Meagher and O'Doherty had thrown themselves from their horses; and as we exchanged greetings—I know not from what impulse, whether from buoyancy of heart or bizarre perversity of feelings—we all *laughed* till the woods rang around; laughed loud and long, and uproariously, till the two teal rose, startled from the reeds on the lakeshore, and flew screaming to find a quieter neighbourhood."

When by their Irish laughter they had expressed their bitter memories, their deceived hopes, all the sufferings they had endured, and all the hatreds that possessed them, they spoke at length of Ireland and of English prisons, of Smith O'Brien and their companions in exile. Alas ! the folly of Ireland had been transplanted to foreign soil. The Irish refugees in America were hotly discussing the most puerile questions ; for example, they asked who was the greatest man of the revolution of 1848. Mitchel had his party, and Meagher had even more numerous supporters, and whilst the two exiles were smoking and talking quietly together, riots broke out in New York in their honour, blows were exchanged between their respective partisans. Smith O'Brien was a subject of interest. This prisoner had refused to accept his liberty on the conditions offered to him, and he had consequently been treated far more severely than his friends. He had to undergo a rigorous seclusion, and it was only upon the representations of a medical officer, and in the company of an armed constable, that he was permitted to take the air in Maria Island. His letters were opened by Government agents, and for a long time he had been prevented from receiving his regular consignments of cigars. In truth, we have a certain weakness for this haughty prisoner, whose sufferings were concealed under the cloak of pride. The aristocratic descendant of a half-savage royal line, he endured his mournful exile with the

silence and dignity of an Indian chief. Mitchel, though his violent opinions, and his even more violent character, separated him from O'Brien, rendered full justice to the moral qualities of the latter, who never blasphemed or insulted his enemies, who never gave way to torrents of fury, or exhausted himself in explosions of pain, who felt no need of announcing his miseries to the entire world, but who endured the blows of fate, without repining, with calm disdain. He visited Smith O'Brien some time after his first interview with Meagher and O'Doherty, and has preserved for us the details of the conversation. He thus describes O'Brien's appearance: "It is sad to look upon the noblest of Irishmen, thrust in here among the offscourings of England's gaols, with his home desolated, and his hopes ruined, and his defeated life falling into the sere and yellow leaf." They discussed the revolution of 1848. Smith O'Brien attributed his failure to the influence of the clergy. "He described to me old and grey-haired men coming up to him with tears streaming down their faces, telling him they would follow him so gladly to the world's end—that they had long been praying for that day; and God knows it was not life they valued: but there was his Reverence, and he said that if they shed blood they would lose their immortal souls, and what could they do?"

The result of the insurrection had not only destroyed the personal hopes of Smith O'Brien, they had destroyed his belief in the future of

Ireland ; he accepted his defeat and regarded Irish Nationality as dead for ever. Henceforward, what interest could he have in the little more or the little less of liberty and happiness for which he might still hope. Once he had tried to escape ; his friends had warned him that a boat would appear at a fixed point off the shore ; but delays took place, occasioned as he learned later by the shipmaster, who had sold the secret of the plot to the Government. At last the boat appeared, and O'Brien jumped into the sea so as to lose no time. When he had reached the little vessel, the three traitors who were with him showed him an armed constable standing on the shore, and cried out at the same time : We surrender ! O'Brien refused to surrender, hoping that the constable would fire upon him, but the wretches hurled themselves on the prisoner and carried him back to the police. O'Brien made no further attempts to escape.

Another excellent type of Irishman is O'Reilly, a character quite unlike O'Brien. We do not meet him in person, but he describes himself in a long letter written from the States to Mitchel. It is difficult to give an impression of this mad, giddy, agile, coy activity. If a squirrel could write, surely this is the way that he would do it. This letter is a genuine phenomenon : it really contains not a single thought, and yet every word in it is animated, every word is a gesture, a grimace, a gambol, a peal of laughter. There breathes through it a strange insensate turbulence

which afflicts one with vertigo. We behold, as it were, the instinctive bounds of some graceful beast of the forest, or the agile and noisy sports of the supple greyhounds. O'Reilly belongs incontestably to the family of the Celtic captain described in a ballad which Mitchel cites, who had red lightnings in his blood. He relates an interview with Kossuth which must have been very amusing; we wish we had been present. Imagine the two strange interlocutors, the Celtic O'Reilly of Breffni O'Reilly, and the descendant of the Tartars gesticulating and shouting. "K.— Lord, if you had seen him! A fine looking fellow; has great eyes, half a dozen foreheads round his head, and probably one stuffed at the back—a most intellectual Hun."

During exile O'Reilly had made many efforts to escape poverty. He had edited a weekly paper, *The People*, in which he attacked the American policy of non-intervention. The journal soon failed. The Americans in their feelings towards the Celts have preserved the traditional distrust of the Anglo-Saxon, and Americans, from the President down to his tailor, looked at his paper, sneered, shrugged, pooh-poohed, or said "clever," but *always added*, "Irish." O'Reilly then tried to infuse into *The Whig Review* some of his revolutionary principles; but the Whigs showed him to the door. Expelled from *The Whig Review*, he tried his luck within *The Democratic Review*, combatted the Whigs and the old-fashioned democrats, and made the acquaintance

of Mr. Douglas, the editor of *Young America*. In the midst of it all he married, lost his children, was on the point of losing his wife, laughed, wept, loved, loathed, intrigued. Indeed I should have to employ fantastic images to convey an idea of the character of this man. A soul like to those spirits that are condemned to live for ever in whirlwinds; a body composed of some elastic substance which cannot touch the earth without rebounding; mercury in the place of blood; and for nervous system the wires of an electric telegraph. He is undoubtedly intelligent, as one of his speeches in America shows: "Ireland must be the avant-garde into Europe, or the Vendée. Throw an army into her and you smash financially and territorially the British Empire; but let the revolution burst and work its way into Italy and be misrepresented by priests and Britishers—and Ireland becomes the deadliest foe of Republicanism in Europe."

In Van Diemen's Land Mitchel experienced none of the dangers he had feared. The convicts and the bushrangers left him undisturbed. For more than a year he had quite a pleasant life with his friend Martin. And even in this distant land he encountered Ireland and the Celtic race, and with the imagination that characterised him he had no difficulty in imagining that he was back on his native soil. The Celt's dislike of altering his habits, and the care with which he isolates himself, with his memories, on foreign soil, are notorious. Mitchel saw an instance of this conservatism on

the farm of Kenneth Mackenzie, a Highlander from Ross, who had long been established in Tasmania with his family. Mackenzie maintained all the old Celtic atmosphere ; in the parlour stood the spinning-wheel, and on the walls glittered an ancient and highly ornamented dirk which one of the girls unsheathed in the Highland manner by a difficult but graceful movement of the wrist. The mother was a true Celt, speaking Erse better than English. All the children's names were Celtic and indicated a family that had experienced no foreign influence and no mixture of blood, and this was not the only Celtic family : Mitchel mentions another, the Connells, originally from Cork. Their housewife, Mrs. Connell, yielded nothing in warlike intrepidity to the celebrated MacGregor housewife, and in the absence of her husband had been able alone to put to flight two ruffianly bushrangers who had come to pillage her house. Mitchel divided his time between visits to colonists, and walking and hunting, chiefly kangaroo hunting.

In the middle of the year 1851 Mitchel received news of the arrival of his wife, and he went to meet her at Launceston, the port at which she was to land. So as to lose no time he begged the deputy-controller at Hobart to send by post the necessary papers for his stay at Launceston. An oversight on the part of this person caused him to be arrested and put in prison, where he spent some twenty-four hours. This short experience reawakened all his slumbering passions. " Im-

prisonment," he noted, "a wholesome and tonic mental medicine. To hear the wards occasionally grating in a British lock I regard as a salutary stimulant, and think of taking a course of it once a year while I remain at liberty."

This happiness was to be denied him. At the beginning of 1851 he went to pay a visit at Hobartstown to a companion in exile, Kevin O'Doherty. "We have among us," said O'Doherty, "Pat Smyth, who has been commissioned by the Irish Directory in New York to procure the escape of one or more of us, O'Brien for choice." The newcomer had been one of the insurgents of 1848, but luckier than his fellows, he had embarked on board an emigrant ship bound for America. He had lived like O'Reilly, from hand to mouth, editing a journal at Pittsburg, agitating the question of the Nicaraguan railway in the *New York Sun*, trying to drive America against England, &c. A reunion took place the same evening at Smith O'Brien's. The latter held that the prisoners should first withdraw their paroles; that once this had been done their honour was secure, and that any method of escape would be legitimate, even the corruption of the police or violence (not murder, Smith O'Brien is a moderate). For his own part, O'Brien refused to tempt Fate again. "He entered fully into his reasons—he already had had his chance and he had missed it, and the expenses incurred had been defrayed by public money. "This," he said, "is your chance.

Besides, you have stronger motives to betake yourselves to America than I have ; and you will be more at home there. It may be, he continued, “ that the British Government may find it, some time or another, good policy to set me free, without conditions ; in that case I return to Ireland ; if I break away against their will, Ireland is barred to me for ever.”

The plot failed more than once. It was first decided that a brigantine, “ The Waterlily ” should go from Hobart Town to Spring Bay, situated sixty miles from Bothwell, and should take the fugitives on board. The plot in all its details was discovered, and the Governor took the necessary precautions. Pat Smyth was arrested some time afterwards. Owing to an error on the part of the police, he was mistaken for Mitchel and imprisoned at Hobart Town. The accident led to more delays ; but in June the exiles learnt that a vessel was leaving Hobart Town. Mitchel immediately presented himself before the police officer in Bothwell in order to withdraw his parole.—Eight or ten constables, all armed, were in the vicinity, within call. “ Mr. Davis,” I said, “ here is a copy of a note which I have just despatched to the Governor ; I have thought it necessary to give you a copy.” Mr. Davis took the note ; it was open. “ Do you wish me to read it,” he said. “ Certainly, it was for that I brought it.” He glanced over the note and then looked at me. That instant Nicaragua came in and planted himself at my side. His

worship and the clerk both seemed somewhat discomposed at this; for they knew the correspondent of the *New York Tribune* very well, as also his errand from New York. I have no doubt that Davis thought I had a crowd outside. There is no other way of accounting for his irresolution. Then I said, "You see the purport of the note, sir, it is short and plain . . ." Still he made no move, and gave no order. So I repeated my explanation. "You observe, sir, that my parole is at an end from this moment, and I came here to be taken into custody pursuant to that note." All this while there was a constable in the adjoining room, besides the police clerk, and the guard at the door; yet still his worship made no move. "Now, good morning, sir, I said, putting on my hat. The hand of Nicaragua was playing with the handle of the revolver in his coat. I had a ponderous riding whip in my hand, besides pistols in my breast pocket. The moment I said "good morning," Mr. Davis shouted, "No, no! stay here! Rainsford! Constables!" The police clerk sat at his desk looking into vacancy. We walked out together through the hall; the constable in the district constable's office, who generally acts as his clerk, now ran out, and on being desired to stop us, followed us through the court, and out into the street, but without coming very near. At the little gate leading out into the street we expected to find the man on guard on the alert between us and our horses. But this poor

constable, though he heard the magistrate's order and the commotion, did not move. He was holding two horses, one with each hand, and looked on in amazement, while we passed him and jumped into our saddles."

Subsequently Mitchel and his friend embarked on the *Don Juan*, and after having put in at San Francisco, Greytown, and Cuba reached, in November 1854 the port of New York, where they were awaited by Mitchel's brother and Meagher. So after having long wandered on the waters like Ulysses, Mitchel (this is the style he affects) succeeded in evading the Cavern of the English Polyphemus. He is safe now, he has escaped from the hands of those ferocious Carthaginians; let us take leave of him, and hope that his spirit may become calmer and his views less extreme.

With the exception of Smith O'Brien, all Young Ireland is now united in America; Meagher and Manus had preceded Mitchel, Kevin O'Doherty closely followed him, but of all the European immigrations, the Irish was the least noticed. The Americans arranged no reception for the chiefs, except in the case of Meagher, a very eloquent man, it is true, and the best endowed of the group, who had the honour of being applauded on his arrival by the citizens of New York and Boston. They were not feted with the same enthusiasm as the Hungarian and Italian refugees. The indifference of the European public on which we have remarked re-appears

in an essentially mercantile and Anglo-Saxon people which, without having reason to dislike Ireland, is antipathetic to her in certain aspects of life and character. The cause of the Irish rebels failed to excite sympathy in the States, and the Irish refugees found themselves there in comparative isolation. The notion of forming another Ireland in the States met with no response from Mitchel, who replied that there was but one Ireland. Nor had Mitchel or his fellow-exiles such an influence with their own people in America as the German and Italian refugees exercised upon the German and Italian population of the States. The Irish in America continued to live under the influence of the priests, and as at Ballingarry they abandoned Smith O'Brien, so they were ready to desert, if ordered to do so by their beloved priests, the halls of Celtic eloquence where Meagher or O'Reilly presided. Young Ireland could only act by exciting hate of England, and when England was no longer in sight the Church reacquired all its power. The members of the violent party were condemned to absolute impotence. If, as Mitchel predicts, we shall witness a return of the Heraclidae, this return will be led by the Cross and the Catholic banner, amid smoking incense, and to the song of canticles, but not under the flag of Mitchel, under the guidance of Meagher, or even under the aristocratic leadership of O'Brien.

Wit, eloquence, imagination, a nervous and

hysterical gaiety, courage, not a practical idea, not a single considered opinion on the future of Ireland—that is all Mitchel's book. The author does not reason, does not discuss. He hates, he puts all his powers into his hatred, and it is the same with Ireland. She scarcely knows what she would do with herself if she were free. We civilised peoples have invented a mass of sentiments, unknown to the primitive man, that determine our actions, and we act from prudential, interested or political motives. The Celts are moved only by love or hatred. These two sentiments, so strong in primitive man, will explain all their history to us. Love is at the foundation of their nature, but with them hatred is almost as ancient as love, for it dates from the unknown day on which their first dream was troubled, and their first illusion dissipated, when brutal reality imposed itself fatally upon them. Why then does God preserve so carefully on this earth the remains of a race which was never meant to be there, and which is a perpetual protest against earth?

The secret belongs to Providence. Abel was God's favourite, and yet he was the victim of his brother Cain, and who can say that the gentle Ascenez, who has been martyred from century to century, had not clearer eyes than his other two brothers? For Ascenez is naively and disinterestedly pious, and when he prays to God he does not thank him, like his brother Thogorma, for having given him the forges of Sheffield and the port of Liverpool, the Savannahs of America

and the holy Germanic Empire. He does not say, like his other brother, the supple, clever Riphath,* "Give me the kingdoms of the world, that I may glorify thy name." No, he puts no conditions on his piety, and for this reason Ascenez, untamed Ascenez, will remain with us until the end of time, in order that the earth may have knowledge of disinterested religion, and comprehend that protest of the spirit of Abel, the pious pastor, against the spirit of Cain from whom descend all the Empires of the world. To speak less symbolically, the Celtic race seems to persist in living in order to show that there is something preferable to the assuagement of hunger and thirst, and to riches, power, even work; that a mystical monk, tattered, barefoot, soiled with dust and mud, but penetrated with the principles of the Evangel, can in the scale of souls be superior to wealthy and powerful men, even to a Czar Nicholas, the representative of power, or to a Benjamin Franklin, the useful and virtuous citizen.

* Ascenez, Riphath and Thogorma, fathers of the present three great European races.

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